YUKON FOREST STRATEGY

OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE ON FOREST PLANNING - SUMMARY

FEBRUARY 1998

Summary

This summary of the final report of the Open House Questionnaire on Forest Planning is a summary of responses to the questionnaire available at all "Forest Commission Open House" forums held in the Yukon. In all, approximately 300 people attended the Open House presentations.

Open House Forums:

Location	Date	Attendance
Whitehorse		
High Country Inn	November 17,1997	45
Elijah Smith School	November 19, 1997	48
Golden Horn Elementary School	December 9, 1997	12
Other/ Mail Responses		19
Carmacks	December 15, 1997	15
Dawson City	November 25, 1997	18
Faro	November 20, 1997	20
Haines Junction	December 10, 1997	65
Mayo	November 28, 1997	35-40
Teslin	December 17, 1997	20
Watson Lake	December 4, 1997	28

The open houses used public displays to provoke thought as to the many uses and users of the forest, ranging from recreational, environmental to commercial. The display combined photographs and text.

The goal of the questionnaire was to focus attention and collect information on public perceptions regarding policy principles that will form the basis of the regional forest planning component of the Yukon Forest Strategy. People were encouraged to fill out the questionnaire.

To reduce the potential of wording bias two versions of a each policy principle were developed to reflect values that would need to be considered when developing regional forest plans. This resulted in a more balanced questionnaire, relying on reaction of respondents to two perspectives of each principle.

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics administered the contract to Market Probe to analyze the results and prepare the summary below.

Principle 1. Policy needs to consider how the forest ecosystems vary and how a strategy can best be designed to address the differences between regions, while ensuring that planning is comprehensive and does not exclude important elements.

a: Forest plans in different regions should cover the same topics.

b: Forest plans in different regions should vary so they can cover topics unique to that region.

These statements asked respondents to explore how regional forest plans should be developed for content.

Overall, respondents reflect a desire to have one overall plan or general set of topics, that can allow for the diversity of regions.

Principle 2. What should the long term goals be for sites that have been logged?

a: Shortening the rotation (the time between logging on the same site) should be a forest planning goal.

b: Increasing moose habitat should be a goal of forest planning, even if it delays how frequently some sites may be logged.

One common forestry production goal emphasizes the replanting of young conifers on cleared areas and tending them so that 'rotation time' is minimized. Other goals could include maintenance of natural successional processes, or enhancement of moose habitat and populations. Tradeoffs involve the length of time for reforestation.

Overall, respondents believe the consequence of a longer rotation time for a logging area is a desirable trade-off if there can be increased or preserved moose habitat. But, in a decision to determine the goal for a forestry plan, there is a need to consider more than moose.

Principle 3. Ownership of the writing process of the forest plan.

a: A group of people from this region should write the regional forest plan, with help from the government staff.

b: Let the experts draft forest plans, but make them readable and give me time to review them.

The statements force people to consider their expertise and knowledge and the role that they should consider playing in the process.

Overall, respondents suggest that local communities choose ownership of the writing process for their regions. Due to a level of mistrust, the respondents prefer to accept government or expert input in the form of partnership or assistance.

Principle 4. Should areas be set aside, and of what size, as a prerequisite action in planning?

a: It is not necessary to set aside areas that will never be logged.

b: Some large wild areas should be identified and set aside now, before we make decisions on how much forest will be cut.

Overall, respondents advocate the necessity of setting aside large, untouched areas as a first step toward deciding what areas are to be logged, and that it is important to ensure that, as part of the forest plan, areas of forest will remain unlogged.

Principle 5. What future landscape is contemplated?

a: In the next 50 years, logging roads will go up most valleys in this region.

b: Logging roads will go up a few valleys here in the next 50 years.

These statements sought the level of tolerance to roads and post-logging treatment of roads.

Overall, respondents see the need for access roads to logging as inevitable, but to a limited extent. Respondents encourage the use of existing roads, restoration of new road areas, and careful overall planning to minimize impact of logging.

Principle 6. What criteria should be used to determine what is loggable and should that criteria be applied to all regions?

a: Rules for deciding the size of the loggable forests should vary between regions.

b: The rules to decide on the size of the loggable forest should be the same across the Yukon.

These statements will give direction for determining how to select loggable forest.

Overall, respondents recommend that within the general guidelines and statements of the forest management plan there must be recognition of different ecosystems and regional values. Because of those differences, rules for deciding the size of loggable forest area must be regionally determined.

Principle 7. What is the extent of an individual forest owners' rights and responsibilities in terms of the forest plan within their region?

a: One regional forest plan is needed for forests on farmland, First Nation land, municipal and crown land.

b: Landowners should decide on forest uses on their private lands.

The issue of neighbours and adjacent and future use is brought forward in these statements.

Overall, respondents evinced a stronger opinion for landowner rights, as a "basic right". However, the landowner must respect the regional plan for the area given a concern for preventing destruction and protecting public interests.

Principle 8. What is an appropriate spatial distribution of logging impacts and cumulative effects of logging?

a: Log a small part of many valleys, rather than most of a few valleys.

b: Log a few valleys fully, rather than a small bit of many valleys.

These statements looked at the choice between concentrated or dispersed logging areas.

Overall, respondents state that logging must be done responsibly. To do full-scale logging in a few valleys is undesirable. The preference is to spread logging out over many valleys while ensuring protection of some areas, and adapting a more sustainable approach to logging by using such methods as selective logging.

Principle 9. What is the economic goal over the long term?

a: We should harvest trees most in years when tree products are most valuable.

b: Our forests should be managed to maintain a steady flow of benefits.

This vision includes the management and the preservation of the integrity of timber uses.

Overall, respondents demonstrate that there is an aversion to a market-driven harvest of trees. The ideal situation is to manage the forest at a long-term, sustainable level, and to consider local capabilities in the process of adding value to the harvested logs.

Principle 10. What balance should be struck between immediate use of the forest and the development of regional forest plans?

a: Don't give out long term tenures until regional forest plans are in place.

b: Start building the industry slowly now, rather than planning and studying all the time.

Overall, respondents want to ensure the effectiveness of the forest management plan by restricting long-term tenures until the plan is in place. There is realization, and tolerance, that the industry is already committed and working at present. Respondents prefer local industries.

Principle 11. What is the appropriate knowledge base needed for planning and what is the definition of a commercial forest base?

a: Only inventory the commercial forest base, that is the forest that is near to roads and that has enough economic value to be logged.

b: We need to have good information on the forests throughout the whole region before we start planning.

Overall, respondents define commercial forest in terms of it not being restricted to commercial logging value. Respondents are looking for an inventory of total forest resources. Respondents believe that the more information that is accumulated regarding forest value, the better the forest plan will be.

Principle 12. Who is responsible to enforce compliance of the forest management plan?

a: The government should ensure that forest management actions in plans are completed.

b: The community should look after tracking to ensure that government delivers on promised forest management actions.

These statements examined accountability.

Overall, respondents are aware of their lack of authority to ensure that forest management actions are executed. Therefore, the appropriate enforcer of those actions would be government. Respondents consider the community to be the right medium to track the government's promised actions. There is an expressed need, again, for a level of partnership in the process to alleviate mistrust and eliminate possible bias that could occur without guardianship.

Principle 13. What manner of consultation?

a: Obligations to consult on regional forest plans should be similar across the Yukon.

b: Consultation obligations for forest plans should vary between regions.

These statements focus on standardization and rigor in consultation as part of planning.

Overall, respondents support the principle that consultation is good and necessary. There is strong support for an overall structural sameness in consultation obligations, but there must be techniques that allow for regional diversity.

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YUKON FOREST COMMISSION

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